

## Understanding the Characteristics of Indonesian Ethnic Humor

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**Abstract:** Research on ethnic humor has been done by a number of scholars. Among the most complete study was conducted by Christie Davis in her work entitled *Ethnic Humor Around the Worlds* (1997). In that study, Davis discusses the function and theme of ethnic humor. He argues that the function of ethnic humor, in addition to mocking and belittling those who are outside the group, is to maintain and strengthen the sense of identity of the group member. He noted that in nearly 30 countries, the major theme of ethnic humor is the conflict between stupid-clever. According to him, in ethnic humor the theme of dumb-ingenuous is the most dominant theme in modern times, although other types of humor are also popular. Based on these studies, this paper will examine ethnic humor in Indonesia by using the library method. The purpose of this research is to find the characteristics of ethnic humor in Indonesia. From this study it was found that the function of ethnic humor in Indonesia is different from other cultures. Ethnic humor in Indonesia is not used to deride or disparage other tribes, but rather as a unifier of the various tribes in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** ethnic, humor, Indonesia, culture

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic humor has existed for quite some time, ever since men and women began to realize their differences, the emergence of ethnocentrism and feelings of ethnic identity (Berger, 1998:67). This variant of humor has often appeared throughout history. The themes within this variant of humor that are often researched are first of all humor in the ethnic majority groups, residing in metropolitan centers, and directed towards the ethnic minority groups. Research shows how this variant of humor is more known as ethnic jokes and contains humor about ethnic groups, nations and migrants in the past or today; Second is humor that is directed towards one's own ethnic group. This variant of humor has many sub-variants but the purpose remains the same that is to mock one's self; Third is humor as a force to oppose forms of power in a society (Attador, 2014:218). Humor is a part of everyday dialogue that can shape an individual or group's experience in a certain culture (Motley, 2008: 234) and reflect a society's deep-seated way of looking about an ethnic group (McGoldrick, 2005:741).

If we look at the various cultures throughout the world, conflict and animosity among ethnic groups are often expressed through humor. In this variant of humor, an ethnic group is described as mindless and simple-minded in carrying out everyday activities and even the most basic ones (Flemming, 2014:278). Comedians today tend to use texts of ethnic humor that are more general and can be understood extensively than local humor that is more difficult to understand. The same goes for books about national ethnic humor that are more easily found than local ethnic humor books. According to Smith, the reason behind this is the disappearance of a sense of locality among community members and the renewal of a sense of nationalism as the foundation of identity. Pahl, on the other hand, argues that this occurs due to expansion of people from the city to villages, forcing residents of the village to integrate with them (Davies,1998:14).

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

On ethnic humor, this paper has conducted literature review towards a number of references, among them include Attador (2014). According to him, ethnic humor in general, can be defined as humor that discusses an ethnic group, and not about the person bringing up the humor or the person who listens to it. However, in its development, in the national context, it can also include other ethnic groups that are connected. Ethnic humor has a recurring theme and pattern in society. This implies that the ethnic group has a special relationship as with economics, sociality, and politics. Also, as mentioned in Cashmore (2004), Apte defines ethnic humor as humor that refers to the behavior, habit, character and other aspects, of a group or its members based on their specific sociocultural identity. Ethnic humor reflects a lack of symmetry in the social relation between different ethnic groups. Ethnic humor discusses ambiguity, ambivalence, and discrepancy, in a perspective. In addition, in Esty

(1995), it is mentioned that ethnic humor is one of the most popular types of humor in the workplace. This type of humor can be found in every ethnic group. The type of humor is often the same. Only the ethnic group that is the subject of the humor that keeps changing. It has become part of the habit that workers make humors about behavior and accent of fellow workers who come from a different ethnic background.

### III. METHODOLOGY

In analyzing ethnic humor in Indonesia, this paper uses the library method and collects several ethnic humor texts from several areas to be analyzed using several theories. First is the theory proposed by Berger (1998) that mentions how there are four things that must be observed in researching ethnic humor, that is the subject, the form, the technique and the theme. In many cases, but not in all cases, the subject of the ethnic humor is the ethnic group. The form of humor that is often used several times is in the form of a riddle, although not always. Meanwhile, the techniques include insulting, mocking, imitate, using dialect, revealing simple-mindedness and mistakes.

Another theory as mentioned by Ziv (1998) states that there are four categories in ethnic humor. First is critical humor, which is humor about a group made by members from another group. This type of humor is largely in the form of a critique about a negative character of an ethnic group. Second is self-deprecating humor, which is humor made by members of an ethnic group that contains self-criticism. The third is realistic humor, which is humor which contains funny aspects in the interaction among ethnic groups in a plural society. Fourth is ironic humor which is humor in the form of sarcasm which uses meanings that contradict the true meanings, for example asserting that a weak man is strong.

Lastly, the theory proposed by Ajtoni (2012). According to him, ethnicity in a humor text can be discussed from two perspectives and can be formulated into two questions. First, whether the target of the ethnic humor is made by members of the ethnic group. Second, from which ethnic group is the person making the humor. Ethnic humor is often directed at minority groups in certain areas or ethnic groups that are connected. The format of ethnic humor in general is humor about a simple-minded person. This type of humor is exchanged among ethnic groups that become the subject from one area to another.

Based on these methods, this paper will analyze ethnic humor in Indonesia.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, an analysis of ethnic humor from several ethnic groups in Indonesia, particularly texts from ethnic groups that are rarely published, will be given. As mentioned in the theory, one of the techniques in ethnic humor is the use of language dialect. In this analysis, the texts containing ethnic humor that are selected also use language dialect, such as the following text.

*Pada suatu pagi di rumah makan di Bukit Tinggi.*

*Upik : "Sebesar apo, cinto Uda ka Upik...?"*

*Buyung : "Uda amat mancintai Upik, indak bisa Uda mangutarakannyo."*

*Upik : "Katakanlah, Da."*

*Buyung : "Ibaratnyo Uda iko hand phone, Upiklah simcard-nyo. Tanpo Upik indak ado artinyo hidup Uda ko, sayang..."*

*Upik : "Aaaww, romantis bana Uda, tarnyato..."*

*Buyung : (berdo'a dalam hati) "Tarimo kasih ya Allah., Upik indak tau hand phone buatan Chino ambo iko, berisi tigo simcard..."*

*(<https://www.ketawa.com/2016/01/11401-indak-biso-mengutarakan-cinto.html>)*

This text can be categorized as an ethnic humor text, because it describes the behavior of members of a certain ethnic group in West Sumatera. This can be read from the names of the characters in the text, "Buyung", "Upik" and "Uda". "Buyung" means "a nickname for a boy" and "Upik" means "a nickname for a girl" and "Uda" means "a nickname for an older boy", and the language that is used is Minang language, which is one of the clusters of Melayu language spoken by Minangkabau people as their mother tongue, particularly in West Sumatera, and the setting used, is Bukit Tinggi city, which is one of the cities in West Sumatera province.

The text tells the story of a conversation between Upik and Buyung during one morning in Bukit Tinggi. Upik asked Buyung the extent of Buyung's love towards her. Buyung replied saying that he loves Upik very much, but he cannot express his love in words. Upik continues to push him, so Buyung replies saying that his love for Upik can be illustrated like how a cellphone works in which Upik is the simcard, so without Upik, Buyung is nothing. Upon hearing this, Upik feels flattered, and she tells him that Buyung is very romantic. However, the fact is that in his heart Buyung prays and thanks God because Upik does not know that the cellphone he is

referring to is a cellphone made in China that works with three simcards.

This is what makes the text funny. As we know, in Indonesia cellphones made in China is considered cheap because they are of low quality. Thus, we can interpret Buyung's love toward Upik to also lack of quality, like a cellphone made in China. The adeptness of the person making the humor through an illustration is what makes the text funny.

The next ethnic humor is ethnic humor from the Manado ethnic group located in the northern part of Sulawesi Island:

*Bu Guru: "Maikel, sapa itu Wolter Mongisidi..?"*

*Maikel: "Nentau, Bu Guru..."*

*Bu Guru: "Kalo Sam Ratulangi, sapa dang..?"*

*Maikel: "Nentau, Bu Guru..."*

*Bu Guru: "Bagaimana lei ngana ini? Samua ngana nentau. Nda ja blajar ngana kang?"*

*Maikel: "Ja blajar Bu Guru... dia pe masalah kwa bagini, coba Maikel tanya pa Bu Guru. Bu Guru tau nda Nini Walintukan..?"*

*Bu Guru: "Sapa kang dia?"*

*Maikel: "Kalu Dora Sambow dang Bu Guru tau?"*

*Bu Guru: "Nentau noh.. maar sapa dang dorang itu?"*

*Maikel: "So itu noh, Bu Guru, torang kan masing-masing ada kenalan.."*

*(<https://www.ketawa.com/2014/08/10414-pelajaran-sejarah-pahlawan-nasional.html>)*

The text tells the story of a young female teacher who asks her student Maikel about Wolter Monginsidi. Maikel replies he doesn't know him. Then the teacher asks him another question and this time about Sam Ratulangi. Maikel also does not know him. Then with an angry tone, the teacher asks, why Maikel cannot answer any of the questions. Did Maikel study at all? Then Maikel answered that he did study, but he did not study the names that the teacher mentioned. Then Maikel asked questions back to the teacher, who is Nini Walintukan? The teacher answered that she did not know. Who is that person? Then Maikel asked another a question and this time about Dora Sambow. The teacher again answered that she did not know. Then Maikel asserted that just like him the teacher knew none of the names because they both have different friends.

Looking at the subjects, a teacher and a student called Maikel, we cannot immediately assume that the text is from Manado, because the two subjects are quite general and can belong to other ethnic groups. However, if we take a look at the names used in the text, we can conclude that the text talks about a certain ethnic group, which is Manado, for example the names Wolter Monginsidi and Sam Ratulangi, who are both national heroes of Indonesia that come from Manado. Also, the names Walintukan and Sampow are family names in Manado.

The funny part of this text is the final part of the question and answer that is when Maikel says that is normal if he does not know the names mentioned by his teacher because they have different friends. What makes it funny is that Maikel believes that the names his teacher asks about are names that only his teacher knows, but in fact these names are not only known by people in Manado, but throughout Indonesia, because they are the names of the heroes of the independence struggle and national heroes of the Indonesian people, who come from Manado. As proposed in the theory that part of ethnic humor tells the story of a fool. One example is this ethnic humor from Manado.

Another example of ethnic humor in Indonesia is ethnic humor from Papua, which is one of the provinces in the Irian Island, the eastern part of Indonesia.

*Satu kali Tete deng nene dorang dua suami istri, ada bakugonceng deng tete pu motor baru ka ini. Dorang dua jalan2 sore. Tra lama begini, Motor maso lobang besar, dorang dua talempar dengan motor2.*

*Mamayooo tete de bediri cepat2 angkat motor Nene de liat tete angkat motor nene ganas: "PACE, ko angkat motor ko tra angkat sa ka????".*

*Tete bls nene:... Tete: "bah, ko su lunas, tapi ini motor belum....."*

*(<https://twitter.com/mopapua>)*

In this text, we know that one afternoon, a husband and wife, who are both senior citizens, are trying out a motorcycle that they just bought. However, on the road they hit a large pothole and both the husband and wife fall of the motorcycle. The husband then quickly gets up and picks up the motorcycle. Upon seeing her husband pick up the motorcycle, the wife gets angry and asks the husband why he seems to care more about the

motor more than her. The husband replies saying that the credit for his wife has already been settled, while the motorcycle still has installment loans.

There are a number of reasons why this text can be considered funny. First is the selection of the subjects, a grandpa and grandma. The subjects of this story is *istete* and *nene*. The word *tete* means "grandpa" and the word *nene* means "grandma". It is considered funny, because it is something that is uncommon for a grandpa and grandma to go for a ride on a motorcycle. This humor can be categorized into the incongruity theory. Secondly, the incident where the motorcycle hits a large pothole and causes the grandpa and grandma to fall off. This is also a funny story, even though it is an accident. As mentioned by Raskin, humor can be categorized into intended humor and unintended humor. This kind of humor can be categorized into unintended humor, which is humor that happens because the subject wants to make a joke, but because of an accident. Thirdly, the grandpa says that the credit for his wife has already been settled, while he still has installment loans to settle for his motorcycle.

Like other texts, the form of this humor is the question and answer part, and like most texts, the funniest part of the text is found in the last part of the text. The technique used in this humor is the technique of disparagement. In this text, the husband disparages his wife by comparing her to the motorcycle which is paid through the credit system. This kind of humor can be categorized into the superiority theory category, which is humor that happens when a person feels they are more superior than another and when the other person has committed a mistake or done something wrong. The theme that is brought up in this humor is about the motorcycle installment, and when this humor was made, the phenomenon of paying a motorcycle through credit is nationwide, and not only in the area where this ethnic group lives. If we focus on the language aspect that is being used, which is the Papua language dialect, it can be suspected that the person behind this humor is also of that ethnic group and it is a form of introspection.

Another humor from Timor, which is an island in the southern part of Indonesia.

*Satu kali ni pas hari minggu buce ni pi Gereja. Sampe di gareja pas baru mulai ibadat ju Bapa pandeta angka suara, "kalo ada orang yg bawa HP harap di kasi mati"*

*Pas bapa tua omong ais ju Buce su mulai karingat dingin. Buce pung mata mulai maloi kiri-kanan kaget ju buce bangun lari ko pulang pi rumah, dia sampe dirumah deng napas panjang pedek. Pas sampe ju buce pung mama lia ko tanya.*

*Mama: Buce ko akurang ko lu su pulang jam bagini ni lari ke setan ada buru sa.*

*Buce: ko karmana son bangun lari ko Bapa pandeta bilang sapa yang bawa HP dong mau kasi mati na.*

*(<https://id-id.facebook.com/Cerita-Lucu-Versi-Anak-Timor-25-Agustus-2014>)*

The text tells the story about Buce who went to church. When he went arrived at the church, and he was about to begin prayer, the Priest reminds everyone that everyone bringing cellphones will be terminated. Upon hearing the Priest, Buce becomes anxious. He looks to his right and to his left, then he runs back home. When he reached his house, barely catching his breath, his mother asks him about what had happened, and why Bruce is home so fast and ran like he was being chased by the devil. Buce replied that he ran back home like a devil was chasing him because the Priest told him that whoever brought a cellphone will be terminated.

Upon reading this text, we are reminded of a similar text written in the Indonesian language which is the country's national language. As mentioned in the theory that ethnic humor often repeats the same story that has already been written by another ethnic group, both using dialect language and national language.

This text is funny because there is discrepancy between the different ways of understanding expressions of the Priest and Buce. What is meant by "everyone who brings a cellphone must be terminated" is that what is terminated is the cellphone, so that it does not disturb the process of prayers, while Buce understood it as what "is terminated" is "the person carrying the cellphone" so that he immediately leaves the church and goes home with short breath because he is afraid of being killed. Misunderstanding in reading an expression can also be considered as an act of a fool, which is in line with the opinion that says that a large part of ethnic humor is humor which describes foolish behavior. From the technique, this humor can be included into the humor category that disparages the members of their own ethnic group. Besides from Timor island, this chapter will also discuss humor as one of the examples of ethnic in Sulawesi Island, which is from Bugis Makassar, like in the excerpt below:

*Abu terkejut saat mengetahui rumahnya kemalingan, karena penasaran dia pun bertanya ke istrinya si Jumaria, tentang kronologis perampokan tersebut.*

*Abu : "Kenapa bisa de'?"*

*Jum : "Waktu itu lagi masak ka di dapur kodong."*

Abu : "TV ta hilang, baru diam-diam jaako?"  
Jum : "Iye, maumi diapa, dari pada na bunuh ka..."  
Abu : "Motor ta hilang diam-diam jako juga?"  
Jum : "Iye, na ancam ka kodong."  
Abu : "Uang ta juga na ambil semuaki, diam-diam jako juga?"  
Jum : "Iye, nda bisaka melawan kodong."  
Abu : "Jangan-jangan diperkosa ko juga?"  
Jum : "Iye..."  
Abu : "Baru diam-diam jako jugaa?!!!"  
Jum : "Tidak nah!!! Goyang-goyang tonja sedikit iyaa..."

(<https://www.ketawa.com/2013/02/8639-maling-masuk-rumah.html>)

The subjects in this text are Abu and his wife, Jumaria. The text tells the story of Abu's house where there has recently been a break-in. He then asks his wife why his wife stayed still when the burglar took the television. His wife answered that she stayed still because she was afraid she would get killed. Then his husband asked her again why his wife stayed still when the motorcycle was taken, and his wife answered that she could not fight back. Then his husband asked her again whether she was also raped. His wife answered yes. Upon hearing this answer, the husband asked another question and that is whether his wife also stayed still. Then, his wife answered that when she was raped, she didn't stay still, but she also swayed her body, although only a bit.

Like the previous example, this humor is often found in other ethnic groups, because the theme that is brought up is a general theme, and only retold using the dialect language of another ethnic group. These humor is actually taken from other humor stories written in the national language, which is Indonesian. In addition to being categorized as ethnic humor, this humor can be categorized as sexual humor, because it contains sexual elements that can only be understood by people who have experienced intercourse.

What makes this text funny is Jumaria's words at the end of the question and answer session when she said that she did not stay still but "also swayed". By saying that she also "swayed" it shows that she did not feel she was being raped, but she also enjoyed the sex. If she was raped, then she would have fought back to escape from this act.

Another example of humor is from Ambon, which is the capital city of the Maluku province, Indonesia. The humor shown in this chapter is slightly different than the previous humor texts which are more general in nature, but written in the dialect language of a certain ethnic group. The following humor is only shared among members of the ethnic group in Ambon.

*Suatu malam ada oma yang so sekarat, somo 'lewat' oma.. oma titip pesan pa opa..*

*Oma : "Opa, kita somo mati ini, kita pe pesan cuma satu, se pake akang kita pe baju pramuka dulu lengkap deng depe kaku deng piso ne sebelum ngonni semaso di peti pa kita.."*

*Opa : (sambil menangis) "Iyo oma."*

*Depe eso, di kebaktian penguburan, pendeta abis ba khotbah berdoa, dia lia samua so manangis-manangis ini, mari jo torang satu dalam doa..*

*Pendeta : "Di akhir doa pendeta bilang, "jangan menangis samua.. oma nyanda pigi kamana-mana (samua ta kage, apa ni pendeta pe maksud, so tau-tau oma so mati), oma cuma pigi Jambore..."*

(<https://humorsingkat.wordpress.com/tag/humor-daerah-ambon>)

The text tells the story of a dying grandma. Before she dies, she has one last request which she tells to her husband. She requests that after she dies, she would like to be dressed in a girl scout uniform. When she died, during the funeral, the priest asked all those who cried to pray for her. In the final part of the prayer, the priest asked everyone to not cry, because the grandma did not go anywhere. These words made everyone surprised and have questions about what why the priest said that the grandma has not gone anywhere, while the fact is the grandma has died. Then the priest continued his words saying that the grandma only left for jamboree.

There are two things that make this text funny. First is the grandma's message to the grandpa asking him to dress her in girl scout uniform when she died. It is funny, because it is not a common request. Usually, when a person dies, a grandma is dressed in an official attire in a coffin, not in a girl scout uniform. This humor can be categorized as incongruity theory. Secondly, when the priest says that the grandma is not going anywhere, but she will take part in a jamboree, which is a scouts meeting in the form of a large camping gathering. This is also funny, because usually when a person dies they will visit the afterlife not jamboree, but because the grandma is dressed in a scout uniform, then the sermon of the priest is said looking at the grandma's

condition. One of the forms of humor is a humor that occurs because of a person's intelligence making spontaneous words.

Another ethnic humor that is made a research corpus is taken from Java Island. As known, in Java Island there are numerous ethnic groups. However, what is taken as an example in this article is a humor from one of the ethnic group in Central Java, which is in Tegal.

*Mc D bagian siji.*

*Tuyem : "Halloo... mekdi?"*

*Mc D : "Iya..ada yg bisa dibantu?"*

*Tuyem : "Ayame ana..?"*

*Mc D : "Oh ada..."*

*Tuyem : "Jajal diadhu karo ayame inyong..?!"*

*McD : "????"*

*Mc D bagian 2.*

*Tuyem : "allooo...mekdi?"*

*Mekdi : "Iya..."*

*Tuyem : "Delivery order?"*

*Mekdi : "Iya!"*

*Tuyem : "24jam?"*

*Mekdi : "Iya..."*

*Tuyem : "Oooh hebat ya, kowe ora turu2...!"*

*Mekdi : "????"*

*( <https://www.ketawa.com/2012/10/8297-mesen-mc-d.html> )*

Compared to the previous texts, although it still takes the form of question and answer, this text appears more brief, because there are two questions. The same goes for the language aspect, because it is more brief, the mix between dialect language and national language is also more clear. The use of national language in the text is quite equal and this is perhaps caused by the theme that is used which is a modern theme that is quite popular recently and has spread nationwide, that is about fastfood.

The first thing that attracts people to read this text is that there are two words that oppose one another, which is Tegal and McD. In Indonesia, besides known for its funny dialect, Tegal is known for its funny dialect, and also known as an ethnic group that has succeeded in developing a sidewalk shop known as Warung Tegal (Warteg) throughout Indonesia, while McD (McDonald) is the largest fast food restaurant chain in the world.

What makes this text funny is the content of this text illustrates a member of the ethnic group in Tegal called Tuyem who succeeded in making one of the workers of McD annoyed. Members of the ethnic group in Tegal often become the object of mocking by people, and in this text he became a subject that mocks people. This model of humor is included into the category of relief theory.

In the first text, Tuyem mocked the worker of Mekdi by asking whether there is still some chicken. After the worker said there was plenty of chicken, he then asked the chicken in McD to compete with his chicken. This is what made the text funny. Because the chicken in McD is not a living chicken, but fried chicken. In the second text, Tuyem asks the McD employee again, whether the restaurant provides delivery order. When the employee answered 24 hours, Tuyem told the employee that he did not sleep for 24 hours. This answer is also funny, because this employee did not expect this response. Something that is unexpected also makes the text funny.

Another form of ethnic humor which has a modern theme is ethnic humor from Bali. This is seen from the name Justin Bieber, which is mentioned in this text. Justin Bieber is a singer and a song writer from Canada.

*Kacerita di rumah sakit bersalin I jantung ngantosang somahne ngelah pianak.*

*Dr Anak: "Bihhh.. selamat nggih Pak Jantung, anaknya sudah lahir dengan sehat,"*

*I Jantung; "suksma bu dokter, kurenan tiang sapunapi..?"*

*Dr Anak; "Oooh, Ibuk Utin sehat manten Pak.. cuma perlu istirahat dumun nggih.. Ngomong2... sire nama anaknya Pak??? ...."*

*I Jantung: "Jastin Bibar, dok"*

Dr Anak: "mimih keren, sire sane ngefans ken Justin?"

I Jantuk: "Sing je keto Dok.. nto nak singkatan... JAntuk Sama uTIN BKinnya di jimBARan.... @%&\*-gdubrakkkk@%&\*((

(<https://banyolbali.wordpress.com/tag/cerita-lucu-bali>)

This text tells the story about I Jantuk who's wife has just given birth to a baby boy. The doctor congratulated I Jantuk and explained that the baby is in healthy condition. The same goes for the mother, although she needs to get a lot of rest. I Jantuk said thank you for the kind words and advice from the doctor. Then, the doctor asked about the name of the child. I Jantuk, answered that the name will be Jastin Bibar. Upon hearing the name, the doctor expressed his admiration and asked whether I Jantuk is a fan of Justin. I Jantuk replied that she named the child Justin Biber not because she is a fan but because it is an acronym of his name, his wife's name, and the name of the place where they had the baby, JAntuk Sama uTIN BKinnya di jimBARan.

The first thing that makes this text funny is when I Jantuk named the baby by copying the name of a famous international singer, Justin Bieber. In this theory it is mentioned that one of the techniques of ethnic humor is replication. Why is it funny? Because it is not common for a regular person who lives in a remote area to name their child the name of an international popular person. The parents should be able to name the child using a name that is common in the area. Something that is uncommon becomes something funny. This kind of humor can be categorized as incongruity theory.

In addition, another thing that is funny is when I Jantuk said that the name was given to the child is not because he and his wife like person, but because it is a combination of his name, his wife's name, and the place where they had intercourse to have the baby. In this type of humor there is something called punning, which is word play by changing the letter, word part, or word with another to add a sense of funniness. In this text, the name Justin Bieber is transliterated into Indonesian language into Jastin Bibar and claimed as the acronym for *JAntuk Sama uTIN BKinnya di jimBARan*. The more messy the acronym, so not in line with the formal acronym, the higher the level of funniness.

## V. CONCLUSION

After conducting research towards several ethnic humor in Indonesia, this paper finds that the theory proposed by Berger (1998) is in line with ethnic humor in Indonesia that is the subject that is described is an ethnic group, takes the form of a riddle, and contains techniques, such as insulting, mocking, imitating, use of dialect, and revealing simple-mindedness.

From the four categories proposed by Ziv (1998), there are two categories that are in accordance to ethnic humor in Indonesia, which is self-deprecating humor, that is humor made by the ethnic group themselves and contains self-criticism and realistic humor that is humor containing funny aspects in the interaction of ethnic groups in a plural society.

However, the theme ethnic humor in Indonesia is not like what Attador (2014) mentions regarding ethnic humor's focus on insult of the ethnic majority group towards minority ethnic groups, or as a force to resist the power in a society, but as part of daily conversations, as identified by Motley (2008), expresses a society's perspective about an ethnic group as proposed by Mc.Goldrick (2005), illustrates the stupidity of mundane actions, as mentioned by Flemming (2014), and mostly written in the national language, as identified by Davies (1998).

Thus, there are similarities and differences between this research and with the one conducted by Davies (1997). He believes that the function of ethnic humor throughout Indonesia is to denounce or disrespect another ethnic group and maintain and strengthen a sense of identity in a group, while the function of humor in Indonesia is to maintain and strengthen the identity of the ethnic and tribal groups in Indonesia.

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